

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

In the Final Office Action, dated November 5, 2003, claims 30, 33-39 and 43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,943,093 to Melling et al. (hereinafter "Melling"). Claims 18-25 and 29 are allowed. Claims 31-32 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicants cancel claim 31 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 72-79 have been added. Claims 30 and 32 have been amended to include subject matter in claims 31-32 indicated by the Examiner to be allowable. Accordingly, claims 18-25, 29-30, 32-39 and 43-79 remain pending in this application with claims 18-25, 29-30, 32-39, 43, and 72-79 under consideration.

The Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 30, 33-39 and 43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Melling. Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 31 and 32.

Independent claim 30 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of dependent claim 31, which has been indicated by the Examiner to contain allowable subject matter. Claim 32 has been rewritten in independent form incorporating all of the limitations of the base claim 30.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 30 and 32 are in *prima-facie* condition for allowance in light of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 31-32.

Applicants also submit that dependent claims 33-39 and 43 should be allowed for at least the same reasons as independent claim 30 upon which they depend and for the additional features that they recite. Claim 31 is canceled. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 30, 33-39 and 43 and the objections to claims 31 and 32 be withdrawn.

New Claims 72-79 are Patentable

By way of the foregoing amendment, Applicants add new claims 72-79, which are dependent upon claim 32. Applicants respectfully submit that new dependent claims 72-79 are allowable at least because of their dependence upon allowable claim 32 and for the additional features that they recite.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments to place the application in clear condition for allowance or, in the alternative, in better form for appeal. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP

Dated: February 5, 2004

By:



Baldine Brunel Paul

Registration No. 54,369

Customer No. 09629

MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP

1111 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20004

Telephone: (202) 739-3000

Facsimile: (202) 739-3001